

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL EXCURSIONS IN OPERA LAND

Plot and Music of Leoncavallo's Opera

Description of "Pagliacci"—The Prologue a Questionable Dramatic Device, but an Excellent Musical—Principal Themes of the Score—"The Comedy Is Finished"—Beethoven and Rabelais.

By H. E. KREHBIEL.

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RINUCCINI'S "Dafne," which was written 300 years ago and more, begins with a prologue which was spoken in the character of the poet Ovid. Leoncavallo's "Pagliacci" also begins with a prologue, but it is spoken by one of the people of the play; whether in his character as *Tonio* of the tragedy or *Pagliaccio* of the comedy there is no telling. He speaks the sentiments of the poet and wears the motley of the other. Text and music, however, are ingeniously contrived to serve as an index to the purposes of the poet and the method and material of the composer. In his speech the prologue tells us that the author of the play is fond of the ancient custom of such an introduction, but not of the old purpose. He does not employ it for the purpose of proclaiming that the tears and passions of the actors are but simulated and false. No! He wishes to let us know that his play is drawn from life as it is—that it is true. It welled up within him when memories of the past sang in his heart and was written down to show us that actors are human beings like unto ourselves.

An unnecessary preachment, and if listened to with a critical disposition rather an impertinence, as calculated to rob us of the pleasure of illusion which it is the province of the drama to give. Closely analyzed, *Tonio's* speech is very much of a piece with the prologue which *Bully Bottom* wanted for the play of "Pyramus" in Shakespeare's comedy. We are asked to see a play. In this play there is another play. In this other play one of the actors plays at cross purposes with the author—forgot his lines and himself altogether and becomes in reality the man that he seems to be in the first play. The prologue deliberately aims to deprive us of the thrill of surprise at the unexpected denouement, simply that he tell us what we already know as well as he, that an actor is a human being.

Plainly, then, from a didactic point of view, this prologue is a gratuitous impertinence. Not so its music. Structurally, it is little more than a loose-joined pot-pourri, but it serves the purpose of a thematic catalogue to the chief melodic incidents of the play which is to follow. In this it bears a faint resemblance to the introduction in Beethoven's "Romeo and Juliet" symphony. It begins with an energetic figure.



which is immediately followed by an upward scale passage with a saucy flourish at the end. The motif is not unlike the flourish of a whiplash with a cracker at the end. It helps admirably to picture the bustling activity of the *festa* into which we are soon to be plunged. The bits of melody which are now introduced might all be belted in the Wolzogen-Wagner manner with reference to the play's peoples and their passions if it were worth while to do so, or if their beauty and eloquence were not sufficient unto themselves. First we have the phrase in which *Canio* will tell us how a clown's heart must seem merry and take laughter though it be breaking:



Next the phrase from the love music of *Nedda* and *Silvio*:



The bustling music returns, develops great energy, then pauses, hesitates and makes way for *Tonio*, who putting his head through the curtain, politely asks permission of the audience, steps forward and delivers his homely, which is alternately declamatory and broadly melodious. One of his melodic later becomes the theme of the between-acts music, which separates the supposedly real life of the strolling players from the comedy which they present to the mimic audience:



At last *Tonio* calls upon his fellow mountebanks to begin their play. The curtain rises. We are in the midst of a rural celebration of the Feast of the Assumption on the outskirts of a village in Calabria. A perambulant theatre has been set up among the trees and the strolling actors are arriving, accompanied by a crowd of villagers, who shout greetings to *Clown Columbine* and *Harlequin*. *Nedda* arrives in a cart drawn by a donkey led by *Beppe*. *Canio* in character invites the crowd to come to the show at 7 o'clock (*venite ore*). There they shall be regaled with a sight of the domestic troubles of *Pagliaccio* and see the fat mischief maker tremble. *Tonio*

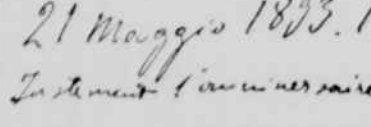
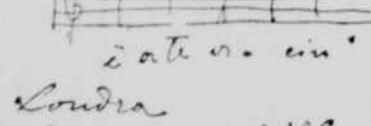
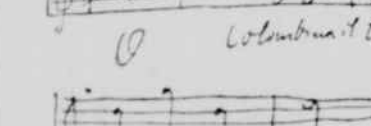
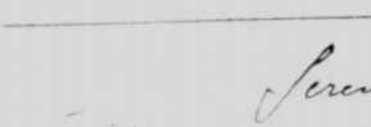
wants to help *Nedda* out of the cart, but *Canio* interferes and lifts her down himself; whereupon the women and boys twist *Tonio*, *Canio* and *Beppe* accept an invitation from a villager to wet their whistles at the tavern, but *Tonio* remains behind on the plea that he must cury the donkey. The hostile villager playfully suggests that it is *Tonio's* purpose to make love to *Nedda*. *Canio*, half in earnest, half in jest, points out the difference between real life and the stage. In the play, if he catches a lover with his wife, he flies into a mock passion, preaches a sermon and takes a drubbing from the sworn to the amusement of the audience. But there would be a different ending to the story were *Nedda* actually to deceive him. Let *Tonio* beware! Does he doubt *Nedda's* fidelity? Not at all. He loves her and seals his assurance with a kiss. Then off to the tavern.

Hark to the humpback! Huzza, here come the *compagnari*! Drone pipes droning and chaunters skirling—as well as they can skirl in Italian! Now we have people and pipes on the stage and there's a bell in the steeple ringing for vespers. Therefore a chorus. Not that we have anything to say that concerns the story in any way. "Din, don!" That would suffice, but if you must have more: "Let's to church. Din, don." All's right with love and the sunset. Din, don! But mamma has her eye on the young folk and their inclination for kissing. Din, don! Bells and pipes are echoed by the singers.



And again—*Canio* is left alone. There is a little trouble in her mind caused by the fierceness of *Canio's* voice and looks. Does he suspect? But why yield to such fancies and fears? How beautiful the mid-August sun is! Her hopes and longings find expression in the Balladella—a waltz tune with twitter of birds and rustle of leaves for accompaniment. Pretty birds, where are you going? What is it you say? Mother knew your song and used once to tell it to her babe. How your wings flash through the ether! Headless of cloud and tempest, on, on, past the stars, and still on! Her wishes take flight with the feathered songsters, but *Tonio* brings her rudely to earth. He pleads for a return of the love which he says he bears her, but she bids him postpone his protestations till he can make them in the play. He grows desperately urgent and attempts to rape a

girl. He is interrupted by the arrival of *Clown Columbine* and *Harlequin*. *Nedda* arrives in a cart drawn by a donkey led by *Beppe*. *Canio* in character invites the crowd to come to the show at 7 o'clock (*venite ore*). There they shall be regaled with a sight of the domestic troubles of *Pagliaccio* and see the fat mischief maker tremble. *Tonio*



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THOMAS EGAN,
Irish tenor, who will be heard at the Manhattan Opera House to-night.

kiss. She cuts him across the face with a donkey whip, and he goes away blaspheming and swearing vengeance. Then *Silvio* comes—*Silvio*, the villager, who loves her and who has her heart. She fears he will be discovered, but he bids her be at peace; he had left *Canio* drinking at the tavern. She tells him of the scene with *Tonio* and warns him, but he laughs at her fears. Then he pleads with her. She does not love her husband; she is weary of the wandering life which she is forced to lead; if her love is true let her fly with him to happiness. No! 'Tis folly, madness; her heart is his, but he must not tempt her to his destruction. *Tonio* slinks in and plays eavesdropper. He hears the mutual protestations of the lovers. *Nedda* yield to *Silvio's* wild pleadings, sees them locked in each other's arms, and hurries off to fetch *Canio*. *Canio* comes, but not in time to see the man who had climbed over the wall, yet in time to hear *Nedda's* word of parting: *Tonio* slinks in and plays eavesdropper. He hears the mutual protestations of the lovers. *Nedda* yield to *Silvio's* wild pleadings, sees them locked in each other's arms, and hurries off to fetch *Canio*. *Canio* comes, but not in time to see the man who had climbed over the wall, yet in time to hear *Nedda's* word of parting:

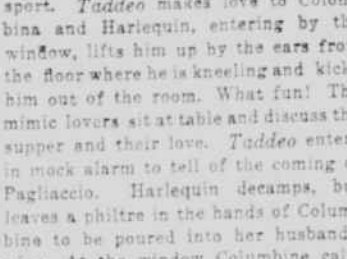


ELVIRA AMAZAR,
Soprano, of the Boston National Grand Opera Company.

dissemble; the gallant may be caught at the play. The others go out to prepare for their labors. *Canio* staggers toward the theatre. He must act the merry fool, though his heart be torn! Why not? What is he? A man? No! a clown! On with the motley! The public must be amused. What though *Harlequin* steals thy *Columbine*? Laugh, *Pagliaccio*, though thy heart break! The between-acts music is retrospective; it comments on the tragic emotions, the pathos foretold in the prologue. (No. 4) Act II brings the comedy which is to have a realistic and bloody ending. The villagers gather and struggle for places in front of the booth. Among them is *Silvio*, to whom *Nedda* speaks a word of warning as she passes him while collecting the admission fees. He reminds her of the ascription; she will be there. The comedy begins to the music of a graceful minuet:



Columbine is waiting for *Harlequin*. *Taddeo* is at the market buying the supper for the mimic lovers. *Harlequin* sings his serenade under the window: "O *Columbine*, if *tenero* *fidio* *Arlecchino*"—a pretty measure! *Taddeo* enters and pours out his admiration for *Columbine* in an exaggerated cadenza as he offers her his basket of purchases. The audience shows enjoyment of the sport. *Taddeo* makes love to *Columbine* and *Harlequin*, entering by the window, lifts him up by the ears from the floor where he is kneeling and kicks him out of the room. What fun! The mimic lovers sit at table and discuss the supper and their love. *Taddeo* enters in mock alarm to tell of the coming of *Pagliaccio*. *Harlequin* decamps, but leaves a philtre in the hands of *Columbine* to be poured into her husband's wine. At the window *Columbine* calls after him: "A stanotte—per sempre sarò tua!" At this moment *Canio* enters in the character of *Pagliaccio*. He hears again the words which *Nedda* had called after the fleeing *Silvio*, and for a moment is startled out of his character. But he collects himself and begins to play his part. "A man has been here!" "You've been drinking!" The dialogue of the comedy continues, but ever and anon with difficulty on the part of *Pagliaccio*, who begins to show a sinister infection into his words. *Taddeo* is dragged from the cupboard in which he had taken hiding. He, too, puts color of verity into his lines, especially when he prates about the purity of *Columbine*. *Canio* loses control of himself more and more. "Pagliaccio no more, but a man—a man seeking vengeance. The name of your lover!" The audience is moved by his intensity. *Silvio* betrays anxiety. *Canio* rages on. "The name, the name!" The mimic audience shouts, "Bravo! *Nedda*! If he doubts her she will go. 'No, by God! You'll remain and tell me the name of your lover!' With a great effort *Nedda* forces herself to remain in character. The music, whose tripping dance measures have given way to sinister mutterings in keeping with *Canio's* mad outbursts, changes to a gavotte:



A stanotte—per sempre tua sarò—"To-night, and forever, I am yours!" He throws *Nedda* aside and gives chase after the fugitive, but is baffled. He demands to be told the name of her lover. *Nedda* refuses to answer. He rushes upon her with dagger drawn, but *Beppe* intercepts and disarms him. There is haste now; the villagers are already gathering for the play. *Tonio* insinuates his wicked advice: Let us



Columbine explains: she had no idea her husband could put on so tragical



MME. LILLIAN BRETON,
Soprano, one of the soloists at to-night's benefit concert at the Manhattan.

mask. It is only harmless *Harlequin* who has been her companion. "The name! THE NAME!" *Nedda* sees catastrophe approaching and throws her character to the winds. She shrieks out a defiant "No!" and attempts to escape from the mimic stage. *Silvio* starts up with dagger drawn. The spectators rise in confusion and cry "Stop him!" *Canio* seizes *Nedda* and plunges his knife into her: "Take that! And that! With thy dying gasps thou'lt tell me!" Woful intuition! Dying, *Nedda* calls: "Help, Silvio!" *Silvio* rushes forward and receives *Canio's* knife in his heart. "Gesumama!" shriek the women. Men throw themselves upon *Canio*. He stands for a moment in a stupor, drops his knife and speaks the words: "The comedy is ended." "Ridi, *Pagliaccio*!" shrieks the orchestra as the curtain falls.

"Haudite, amici," said Beethoven on his death bed, "la commedia finita est!" And there is a tradition that these, too, were the last words of the architect Rabelais. "When *Pagliaccio* was first sung here (in Boston), by the Tavery company," says Mr. Philip Hale, "*Tonio* pointed to the dead bodies and uttered the sentence in a mocking way. And there is a report that such was Leoncavallo's original intention. As the *Tonio* began the piece in explanation as he should end it. But the tenor (de Lucia) insisted that he should speak the line. I do not believe the story. (1) As *Mauro* was the original *Tonio* and the tenor was comparatively unknown, it is doubtful whether *Mauro*, of all men, would have allowed of the loss of a fat line. (2) As *Canio* is chief of the company it is eminently proper that he should make the announcement to the crowd. (3) The ghastly irony is accentuated by the speech when it comes from *Canio's* mouth."

The Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, Max Jacobs, conductor, one of the oldest orchestral clubs in America, will resume its rehearsals at the Imperial Hotel, Fulton Street and Red Hook Lane, on Tuesday evenings, beginning September 26.

Miss Paquita Madruguera, Spanish pianist, pupil and protégée of the late Granados, will arrive in early October to make her first American tour.

Louis Graveure opens his season at the Worcester Festival. After concert engagements in the East he will tour through Northwest Canada and California.

The Music Lovers' Club will this winter resume its work of studying the programmes for certain concerts given by the Symphony Society of New York, of which organization it has been an auxiliary for the last four years. Only subscribers to either the Friday or the Sunday series of the Symphony Society concerts can become members of the club and profit by the advantages offered in connection with musical works they are about to hear. Circulars and further information can be secured at Room 1202, Aeolian Hall.

Miss Beatrice Harrison, English cellist, who has been doing much work in London this summer, playing at benefit concerts for the Allies, will arrive in America the middle of October.

Mme. Julia Culp, Dutch lieder singer, who has been spending the summer in Europe, will arrive in America in early November. Mme. Culp commences her season in Philadelphia and later will tour through the Northwest and California. She will give her first New York recital on November 28 at Carnegie Hall. She will be accompanied by Mr. Bos.

Mme. Yvette Guilbert will appear again next season at Maxine Elliott's Theatre in a series of recitals to be given twice a week, during November and December, on Sunday evenings and Friday afternoons. While the Sunday evening recitals, called "Les Veillées Françaises," will be as heretofore vocal and musical, the Friday afternoons, called "Les Matinées Parisiennes," will have in addition a literary character. Mme. Guilbert will be assisted by Professor Jean Beck, of Bryn Mawr College, and Clayton Hamilton, who will comment on her songs. The first recital will take place Friday afternoon, November 2.

RUGGIERO LEONCAVALLO, COMPOSER OF "PAGLIACCI"

The Coming Season in New York Music Circles

Philharmonic and New York and Boston Symphony Societies Announce Dates for Winter Concerts—Plans of Other Music Organizations.

Entering upon the thirty-second year of Walter Damrosch's direction, the Symphony Society of New York announces a series of concerts for the coming season. The programme will be given at Aeolian Hall and will, as usual, include sixteen Sunday afternoons, beginning on October 22 and extending to March 4, and eight Friday afternoons, beginning on October 27 and extending to March 2.

Several of the more important numbers will be heard for the first time at these concerts, and besides the standard works of the symphonic composers of the past the programmes will include novelties by Ravel, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Rabaud, Sinigaglia, Suk, Grainger and two American composers, Chadwick and Loeffler. Among the soloists who will be heard at these concerts are Alma Gluck, Josef Hofmann, Efrem Zimbalist, Elena Gerhardt, Harold Bauer, Frieda Hempel, Mischa Elman, Sophie Braslau, Carlos Salzedo, Olga Samaroff, Albert Spalding, Julia Clausen, George Barrere, Ossip Gabrilowitch, Alexander Sakhovsky, Percy Grainger and Engelbert Roentgen. Last year's subscribers who wish to retain the same seats for the corresponding series of this year may take up their tickets at the offices of the society, in Aeolian Hall, before October 2.

The Society of the Friends of Music announces for its fourth season a series of five afternoon concerts at the Ritz-Carlton, beginning Wednesday, November 8. A public performance will also be given at the Metropolitan Opera House early in May, similar to that of Mahler's choral symphony last year.

Continuing its policy of the past, the society will produce only such music as is not easily to be heard elsewhere, including unfamiliar old compositions, as well as the more interesting of the newer works. Among the numbers to be performed during the season are vocal quartets by Brahms and Stravinsky, directed by Carl Friedberg; two Bach cantatas and orchestral works of Richter, Sacchini and Gretry, conducted by Sam Franco; piano concertos of Bach and Mozart, played by Guiomar Novaes, with an orchestra under the direction of Pablo Casals, and the "Kindertotenlieder" and "Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen" of Mahler, sung by Tilly Koenen and Paul Draper, with an orchestral accompaniment led by Arthur Bodansky.

Membership in the society is open to all who are sincerely interested in good music. There are three classes of members: Regular, \$20, receiving two tickets for the entire series of concerts; associate, \$10, receiving one ticket to each concert, and professional, \$5, also receiving one ticket. The professional class already includes most of the leading musicians of New York.

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Application for membership may be made at any time to Walter E. Maynard, 200 Fifth Avenue.

Subscribers to both series of the Boston Symphony concerts in Carnegie Hall have until October 1 to remit their checks to Boston and take up their tickets. Notices have already been sent out, and the greater part of them have already responded. Such tickets as are not taken up by that time will be allotted to applicants, and as there is a waiting list of more than three hundred for each series of concerts, those who wish to save their seats should take note of this fact. Carnegie Hall the coming season, as in the past, will be entirely sold out for each series. The concerts will be given on Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons. The dates are: November 2 and 4, November 10 and December 2, January 4 and 6, February 15 and 17, and March 15 and 17. Dr. Muck will, of course, direct at the concerts.

Waslav Nijinsky is daily superintending rehearsals of the Serge de Diaghileff Ballet Russe at the Grand Central Palace. The rehearsals will be held every day from 10 to 12 a. m. and from 3 to 5 p. m. until October 9, when the Ballet opens at the Manhattan Opera House, under the management of the Metropolitan Musical Bureau. The greater part of each day is being spent on "The Mephisto Waltz" and "Till Eulenspiegel," the two ballets which will have their premieres in New York, Nijinsky taking the leading role in each. Adolf Bolm is directing the rehearsals of "Sadko," the undersea ballet, which is new to America.

The Philharmonic Society of New York announces the season of 1916-1917 as its jubilee year. America's oldest orchestral organization is now entering into the seventy-fifth year of its existence. The activities of the society have been continuous since 1842. The jubilee year will be celebrated by a series of performances to be given in January, the particulars of which will be announced later. The Greater New York season of the Philharmonic will include twelve subscription concerts on Thursday evenings, sixteen Friday afternoons, four Saturday evenings and twelve Sunday afternoons, all subscription series at Carnegie Hall. In addition five Sunday afternoon concerts will be given in Brooklyn at the Academy of Music.

Josef Stransky will begin his sixth season as conductor of the Philharmonic. He will offer a number of novelties by both American and foreign composers. The soloists will include Josef Hofmann, Mischa Elman, Frances Alda, Ernest Schelling, Guiomar Novaes, Alma Gluck, Percy Grainger, Theo Koenen, Leo Schull, Elena Gerhardt, Julia Culp, Maximilian Pilser, Carl Friedberg, Yolanda Mero, Efrem Zimbalist and Margareta Matzenauer. On tour during its winter season the Philharmonic's activities are being steadily extended. Particular attention is paid to visits to school and college towns. Among the colleges and schools already on the route of the orchestra are Princeton, Vassar, Mount Holyoke, Smith, Wells, Westover and Kent.

During the summer the Philharmonic offices have been transferred to the front or Fifty-seventh Street side of Carnegie Hall. The subscription sale is being held at the offices now. Prospectus containing full particulars of the season may be obtained by application at the society's offices.

The Young Men's Symphony Orchestra will open its fifteenth season under the direction of Arnold Valpe on Sunday, October 1. Its meetings will, as usual, be held at Terrace Garden, 155 East Fifty-eighth Street, at 10 o'clock each Sunday morning. The first two meetings—October 1 and 8—will be devoted to the trial of applicants for admission, and regular rehearsals will commence on the 15th. The season will be marked by two concerts in Aeolian Hall in February and April.

"Fighting 69th Benefit at the Manhattan"

Thomas Egan, the Irish tenor, who has just returned from a tour of the West and South, including a visit to Cuba, is the principal solo artist at to-night's "pop" concert at the Manhattan Opera House. The concert will be distinctly Irish in tone and environment, and will be a benefit performance for the 69th Regiment Relief Fund for the regiment. Miss Lillian Breton, dramatic soprano, formerly with the Drury Lane Opera Company in London, is also to be heard.

The programme will be:
Overture, "William Tell".....Koschitz
Irish Symphony.....Stanford
"O Paradiso".....Meynster
Thomas Egan.
Suite, "Alegreza".....Raimo Sano
Mazurka, "Sole".....Tchaikovsky
Serenade, with piano.....Mme. Lillian Breton.
Irish Rhapsody.....Herbert
Serenade, with orchestra.....Dietrich
The Irish Emigrants.....Dietrich
The Low Back Car.....Lower
Selection
When the Boys Come Home.....Thomas Egan.
Oscar Spireaux will again conduct the orchestra. The stage will represent a scene in County Wicklow, Ireland, in the seventh century, Mr. Egan having secured this scenic furnishing from abroad a few weeks ago for his own concert tour, which he begins later this month.